

Residents of the communities across the five States are facing a threat now to the quiet of their communities and also to the value of their homes as well. The residents of my area, the Fifth District of New Jersey, are especially concerned about this. Just recently we held what you call a town meeting of sorts, and nearly 1,500 people came out to the public hearing up in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, and that was just about a month ago. And they came out to voice their concerns directly to the FAA.

The FAA received comments from all present, but wouldn't it have been a lot better if the FAA had taken those comments before they drafted their preferred alternative? The citizens who came to that meeting left with a deep concern that the FAA just is not listening. So this amendment is really here to help force the FAA to listen to those people in the area.

So as noise in these communities increases, there is a very real possibility that the values of their homes are going to decrease. Residents are concerned their communities are going to be drastically affected by the fact that the FAA is simply trying to save 2, 3, 4, 5 minutes from the travelers' air time.

So, in conclusion, we are simply asking now through this amendment that the FAA reconsider their preferred alternative with an eye towards protecting the communities and considering that at the same time that they consider the air travelers as well.

Mr. OLIVER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLIVER. Mr. Chairman, this and the previous amendment go together. Together, if these two amendments pass, our air traffic control system will be set back years in the process from which they have been going forward in trying to modernize both the air traffic design and the TRACON facilities to be used.

The FAA has spent more than \$50 million on airspace redesign in the New York, Philadelphia, New Jersey, western Connecticut area already. They have posted hundreds of outreach meetings to understand the needs and concerns. In addition, the design has undergone independent analysis by the inspector general throughout the process, and the FAA has adopted each of the IG's recommendations.

Now, what are the benefits, what are the purposes of the airspace redesign? Well, number one, we have got this huge expected increase in traffic that I have already spoken to twice.

Secondly, the air traffic region that is being described here, and this amendment only affects that region, not the whole country, only that region, but that air traffic system, that airspace system, is the system where the greatest delays, the greatest delays, are happening as we speak.

The redesign of the airspace would allow for a major reduction in delays, first of all. By so doing, there would be less noise. They would be able to fly at higher altitudes, and use a gradual glide pattern in rather than stepwise glide patterns in, and use the whole airspace so that the net reduction of people who are affected by noise, by the levels of noise, is very large.

In addition to that, environmentally if you are not flying around for long periods of time in the airspace and under delay and in holding patterns and sitting on the tarmac with the engines going, then you are saving a lot of fuel.

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There will be much less fuel burned, therefore, much better air quality control in the process.

All of these taken together, along with the fact that if you've got delays in that major area where so much traffic occurs, then there are backups with delays all over the country. So the air space design issue is a critical issue in totality for our modernization of our traffic control.

So, I oppose the amendment, and I hope it will not be adopted.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota, the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. OBERSTAR. The New York-New Jersey-Philadelphia metropolitan area has the most complex air space in the United States; that means, the most complex air space in the world. Four of the Nation's five airports reporting the worst on-time performance are Newark, LaGuardia, JFK and Philadelphia. Holding time is five times greater than any place in the country.

The percentage of flights that arrive in Newark over an hour late is 15 percent of all the flights. Seventy-five percent of the Nation's domestic and international flights are affected by delays and inefficiencies in the New York-New Jersey-Philadelphia air space, no matter where they're going.

You have international flights arriving from the transatlantic corridor. You have flights arriving from Canada, flights arriving from South America, flights arriving transcontinental from the United States on the east coast merging into this area. Sure, there are awful noise impacts upon residents, but the redesign will save noise to some 619,000 people, shifting it elsewhere, shifting it away from other people. FAA has held over 120 public meetings since they began the process of the air space redesign. This will save 20 percent of delays and 12 million minutes a year. This is important to the Nation, not just to this region.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. I, too, oppose the amendment. I agree that we need

to do something with the problems that are out there. We have to strike a balance between our neighborhoods and our close-in airports. And I know that Mr. GARRETT spoke about 1,500 people showing up for a hearing and/or town hall hearing, some kind. That's a lot of people, so there is a lot of grief and upset out there. But the traffic delays of the New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania airports, as has been pointed out by Mr. OBERSTAR, are the worst in history, and I think it's less than 50 percent of the flights were on time. The FAA does need to act.

At this time, I yield 2 minutes to my friend, Mr. MICA from Florida, a member of the T&I Committee.

Mr. MICA. It is, again, rare that we have the chairmen on both sides of the aisle, the appropriation and authorizing committee, all uniformly in opposition to an amendment. But let me tell you, if you want to close down air traffic in the United States indefinitely in the Northeast, adopt this amendment.

Now, this isn't something that we just cooked up, that we're going to redesign the air space in the Northeast corridor. We started on this in 1998. We haven't redesigned the air corridor in the northeast United States since 1988. Imagine not expanding the roads or the transportation system in the Northeast since 1998 and the congestion you would have, and that's exactly what we've got.

Now, I've been to the districts. I've been to Mr. GARRETT's district, Mr. FOSSELLA's district. I've been to Mr. SHAYS' district. And I continue to work with Members, when I chaired the Aviation Subcommittee, and now as ranking member, and we will work with them, but we have got to redesign the air space. Imagine having no expansion highways. Now, planes are no different than highways; they run in corridors. But we haven't changed it in the Northeast corridor since 1988. We have been working on this redesign since 1998, some 10 years. We have got to make these changes and move forward with them.

And we need to listen to the people. We need to make certain that we don't harm their environment, their noise levels, and take into consideration as many of the points that have been raised. But I urge you to defeat this amendment.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Chairman, might I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Michigan has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI).

Mr. PETRI. I thank my colleague for yielding.

First of all, let me say that there is no one in this body who pays more attention and is more hardworking in defending the interests of his constituents than Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, the author of this amendment. But the fact of